



Agriculture and the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS)

You are invited to participate in the discussion at a Forum presented by

**The Centre
for the Study
of Rural Australia**

at



MARCUS OLDHAM COLLEGE
Developing Professionals in Agriculture and the Horse Industry

on

Wednesday 7 October 2009
9.30am - 12.15pm
Lunch provided

In the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) White paper, the Government committed to implementing policies for reducing agricultural emissions from 2015, so that the sector can contribute to Australia meeting its emissions reduction targets. The Government has not yet decided whether agricultural emissions will be included in the CPRS, or whether agricultural emissions will be reduced using alternative policy measures. A decision on policy options for agriculture has been deferred until 2013 to allow time for research and consultation with agricultural industries into policy options for cost-effectively reducing emissions.

Department of Climate Change (DCC) 2009

With two-thirds of total Australian farm produce being exported, the international context is vital for Australian farmers in the development of domestic climate change policies.

Recent indications are that Australian farmers will be isolated if agriculture's direct emissions are covered within an Australian CPRS.

Developed countries including the United States, Canada, Japan and European countries, have already disclosed that they will be adopting a carrot, not a stick, approach to driving mitigation outcomes from their agriculture sectors. That is, these countries will not cover agriculture under an emissions trading cap.

National Farmers' Federation (NFF) 2009

Although agriculture will not be covered from the beginning of the scheme, the agriculture sector will be affected through increases in farm input costs, such as fertilizer, energy and fuel, due to increased costs of producing these goods under a CPRS.

Dept. of Agriculture and Food Western Australia 2009

As indicated over, the whole subject of agriculture and the proposed CPRS is not only complex but also highly contentious. The agricultural sector is directly responsible for around 17% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions with the major agricultural sources being methane from livestock and nitrous oxide from soils and nitrogenous fertilizer use. Mitigation of these emissions is considered important in terms of reducing Australia's national 'greenhouse footprint' but as some studies have already shown, there could be substantial negative impacts on farm profitability arising from a CPRS. This has prompted bodies such as the NFF to argue that:

- *Climate mitigation policies for agriculture must recognise the unique nature of agricultural production systems and the biological nature of farm production. Policy must also recognise that there are significant limitations on the degree to which agricultural emissions can be reduced and that there are scientific uncertainties in estimating agricultural emissions.*

Further, decisions regarding climate mitigation policies for agriculture must consider the broader impacts across and within whole farm systems

- *Climate mitigation policies for agriculture must recognise the international policy responses so as to avoid leakage of emissions overseas.*
- *Climate mitigation policies for agriculture must deliver, wherever possible, clarity from decision makers to the farm sector.*

The Centre for the Study of Rural Australia has, therefore, invited two of Australia's leading experts – both with international standing and specialising in this area - to share their views on the implications and options for the treatment of agriculture under a CPRS.

Both are heavily involved in the national assessment of alternative greenhouse gas mitigation policies for Australian agriculture.

Speakers



Dr Craig Meer

Assistant Director – Agriculture Section, in the Federal Department of Climate Change, based in Canberra.

Dr Craig Meer is running the National Technical Options Development Group that seeks to develop, evaluate and report on policy options for the agricultural sector. Its focus is on:

- Creating incentives to reduce emissions from livestock and cropping activities
- Building incrementally on data and information already collected by farmers

Considerations in its deliberations include exploring the interactions between, alternative points of obligation (farms, factories, input suppliers, etc.); alternate approaches to emissions reporting, and complementary technologies such as livestock tracking systems.

Professor Tim Reeves

Facilitator



Professor Tim Reeves has worked for 39 years in agricultural research, development and extension, mostly focused on sustainable agriculture in Australia and overseas. He was a pioneer of no-till research in NE Victoria, whilst based at the Rutherglen Research Institute. His professional career includes positions in the Department of Agriculture, Victoria; Foundation Professor of Sustainable Agricultural Production, Adelaide University (1992-95) and Director General of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre based in Mexico (1995-2002).

Recent roles include: Member, United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Hunger; Chair, NSW Agricultural Advisory Council on Gene Technology; Member, European Commission Expert Group for Evaluation of Framework Projects; Chair, Academic Advisory Board on International Community and Development Studies, and Adjunct Professor, Deakin University; Professorial Fellow, Melbourne University; Chair, Board, Joint Centre for Crop Innovation, Melbourne University. He is a Board Director of GRDC and a former President of the Australian Society of Agronomy.

Craig is an economist who prior to joining DCC has worked in The Lowy Institute, the Australian National University and the University of Taiwan.



Dr Richard Eckard

Associate Professor, Melbourne School of Land and Environment, The University of Melbourne.

Dr Richard Eckard is a highly experienced scientist who has focused his research on greenhouse emissions from agricultural systems; nitrogen cycling in agro-ecosystems; and whole-farm modeling of intensive grazing systems. He is a Science Leader in 'Greenhouse in Agriculture' and the Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Program and is an expert participant in DCC's Technical Options Development Group. He is an excellent science communicator who has given much thought to the topic of this forum.

Venue

Marcus Oldham College Function Centre, 145 Pigdons Road, Waurin Ponds, Geelong
(same road as Deakin University)

RSVP by Thursday 1 October 2009

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**ESTATES
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